3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

pits were filled up with a layer three feet thick of branches, matting, straw and leaves, a small hole closed with straw only being left for the gardener to get in and out by.

With regard to fruit, nearly everything that is found in a south of England garden grew well in our garden; most of the fruit indeed ripened too quickly so that there was a good deal of waste. We used to get two crops of green figs, but the trees had to be well covered up in winter to protect them from the frost. Grapes also grew wonderfully, the base of the vine-stem being similarly covered up in winter. Strawberries (known locally as "Russian mulberries") grew in profusion, but never became very sweet or large because they ripened too quickly. Apples and pears were poor, for lack of good European varieties, but peaches, nectarines, black mulberries, greengages and damsons were all as good as could be; the greengages, indeed, were almost too sweet. And yet our orchard was not a good one, compared for instance with those of the chief Andijani merchants. Besides all the above, they grew magnificent cherries, quinces and pomegranates, none of which were good in our garden. Among flowers, most annuals did very well, and roses too if the bushes were carefully buried in winter. D. started a most successful rose-garden with several varieties imported from India.

I have already mentioned the frequency with which we were entertained by the hospitable Chinese officials. This was particularly the case when Chu Tao Tai, as he was generally called, was Taoyin or Prefect of Kashgaria. From the social point of view, apart from everything else, it was a great blow to us when after a long term of office at Kashgar this universally-respected official was transferred to Yarkand in the autumn of 1922. Beaming all over with humour and good-will, he was one of the best hosts I have ever seen, and we always looked forward to his parties. He got over the language difficulty at the more polyglot meals by the simple method of seating all the guests of one nationality together, so that there was always a subdued hum of conversation, if no more; besides which he himself was always an interesting and interested talker and kept the available interpreters fully occupied. What appealed to us most, however, was his consideration for his foreign guests' likes and dislikes. He had evidently made a special study of European tastes and manners, and as far as possible he tempered the wind of Chinese hospitality to the shorn Western lamb.

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
Sinkiang AI 1

indicate. The former lies across Chinese Turkestan to the south of the Tian Shan Range, passing by Kuche and Aksu to Kashgar; the latter, cutting through the Tian Shan Range, runs along its northern side, through Urumchi to the Ili Valley and Kulja. It was this latter route that we followed.

Our cart was returned by the wheelwright fitted with splendid new wheels, the mules were rested, and all promised well for the next lap of the trail. A Chinese traveller's proverb speaks of the long journey from Suchow to Hami as 'unmitigated bitterness,' and of that which still lay before us as a medium between the 'bitter and the sweet.' Certain it was that we had reached the end of most of the brackish water oases, and we found that the plain which now lay before us was, in most places, duly supplied with springs and wells of sweet water. The three halts beyond Hami are known as 'the First, Second, and Third Stops,' and the traveller is expected to do the three stages at a pull. However, after eleven hours we only reached the second halt, and refused to go further. The first night-stage on leaving a resting-place was always particularly trying, coming as it did after a busy day of final preparations and farewell calls. There was no possibility of rest by day or by night, and at the end of twenty-four hours we were always dead beat.

'Second Halt' was an attractive place, watered by a rushing stream. The village was much larger than those south of Hami, and there were apple trees laden with nearly ripe fruit hanging over the walls of the farms. After some hours of sleep, we got up to find the courtyard invaded by a band of men travelling from their homes in Shansi to their business in Kucheng. They were all employees of a large firm, and by the terms of their agreement were allowed to visit Shansi